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Sent: Tue 5/29/2012 7:01:55 PM
Subject: Fw: Casper Star Tribune: State proposes cisterns for Pavillion residents
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State of Wyoming proposes cisterns for Pavillion residents
 By JEREMY PELZER Star-Tribune capital bureau trib.com | Posted: Thursday, May 24, 2012 7:00 am |
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CHEYENNE—The state of Wyoming will sound out Pavillion residents' opinions later this month on whether to establish a series of water cisterns for households whose groundwater has allegedly been contaminated from hydraulic fracturing.

The state is also in talks with Encana Corp., about having the natural gas company help subsidize the cost of trucking in water for the cisterns, Gov. Matt Mead said Wednesday. Those talks come even as the state and Encana have disputed an Environmental Protection Agency draft report released in December linking hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," with water contamination in the area.

Some Pavillion residents say fracking, a process in which water, sand and chemicals are injected underground to break up dense rock that holds oil and gas, has polluted the water they draw from their wells.

Fracking supporters say there is no proof of that claim.

State officials will hold a public meeting at Wind River High School at 7 p.m. on May 31 to see if the 35 or so residents living above or close to the natural gas field want the state to install individual cisterns for them.

The state would pay the \$5,000 to \$10,000 cost of each cistern using money designated by the Legislature earlier this year for that purpose, Wyoming Water Development Commission Director Mike

Purcell said.

However, Purcell said each household would be responsible for the \$100 to \$200 monthly cost of transporting the water from Pavillion or Riverton.

The state has held discussions with Encana about offsetting some of those costs, Mead said. State officials also asked the EPA about chipping in money, but those requests were denied, Mead said.

By informal agreement, cistern water would be only for residential use, Purcell said. The cisterns would take about six months to a year to install, he said.

Wyoming officials have been looking for more than a year at how to supply clean drinking water to the Pavillion area — after the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry told some residents not to drink the water.

If residents aren't receptive to the cistern idea, Purcell said the only remaining option is installing individual reverse-osmosis filtration systems. However, Purcell said many residents said at earlier public meetings that such devices are costly and difficult to maintain.

Earlier this year, Mead also discussed the idea of building a water pipeline to the area, but Purcell said that would cost a prohibitive \$2 million or more.

If residents shoot down the cistern idea, Purcell said, "I don't know what else we would do."

Steve Hugus, one of the Pavillion residents who doesn't have water problems, said the cistern proposal is "a wonderful idea" that should address the handful of households with bad water. But he predicted some of his neighbors who have complained won't be happy with any solution.

"They want to continue to own the problem instead of trying to find the solution," he said.

Purcell and Hugus said the publicity about the area's water quality has made it hard for many residents to sell, refinance or take out loans on their homes.

A number of Pavillion residents who have complained about contaminated well water didn't return phone calls Wednesday.

In the wake of the EPA's fracking report, the state and the EPA are currently conducting further testing of water wells in the Pavillion area. Mead said Wednesday that some preliminary results are in, but he declined to say what they were until further details arrive.

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Read more: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/state-of-wyoming-proposes-cisterns-for-pavillion-residents/article_d9848484-39cc-57d9-a629-d04bbfdf421f.html#ixzz1vnn5zlCC

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